

>>> Julie Chatters 16/10/02 10:50:44 >>>
Letter from Gratton Puxon for Simon.

>>> <ustiben.2@ntlworld.com> 16/10/02 11:47:47 >>>
>RE WOODSIDE<

Dear Mr Redmore,

Further to your telephone call, I thought it useful to put into an email what steps we are taking over the matter of >Woodside< and the future of the residents there.

We share your concerns that after all the efforts of Mr and Mrs Codona, and their good work in the community, some way forward must be found to ensure an acceptable outcome.

It is now clear, at national level, that a growing number of MPs of all parties are prepared to support the provisions of the Traveller Law Reform Bill. Mr David Atkinson (Con.) will be seeking to introduce the Bill in the next session, and Mr Bob Russell (Lib Dem) has arranged a meeting in a committee room for 10 December. >Woodside< and the Bill are the main items on the agenda.

We have been encouraged by Mr Duncan Smith's efforts to make the Conservative Party a party that does take care of the underprivileged. In this atmosphere it would be a disaster to evict the residents of >Woodside< onto the road.

The Bill, of course, will re-create an obligation on local councils to provide caravan sites and make the setting up of private sites easier. Meanwhile, we are considering making an application for a Judicial Review of your decision (if there is no change of policy) not to offer caravan pitches or land to those who are homeless. That is to people who already have no legal place to park their caravan and also face eviction from >Woodside<.

At the same time, we understand that there are several similar cases involving this issue which are likely to come before a judge quite soon. Should there be a ruling that there is an obligation to offer caravan pitches, then it seems only common sense to leave the residents where they are until this obligation can be satisfactorily met by Mid Beds Council.

In addition, you will be aware that a fresh Planning Application has been made in respect of some of the plots at >Woodside<. This is designed to help meet the need in the Mid Beds area for temporary transit sites, as identified by the council itself.

Taking all these circumstances together, it seems to us there are ample grounds for delaying any attempt to evict the residents from >Woodside<. We very much hope that good sense will prevail so that this does not have to happen.

Grattan Puxon
Gypsy Council



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Dear Mr Puxon

Thank you for your email this morning.

I note the various points you make about possible new legislation. The Council's position is that it has followed due legal process to the letter in this matter. The High Court judgement is clear that the Council has been very patient. The Council therefore, expects the occupiers of the rear site to have gone by the end of October. If that is not the case, then regrettable eviction will be carried out.

The High Court judge considered the question of alternative accommodation and homelessness at length in his judgement. He noted that the scale of the Woodside site "is unacceptable given the provision of Gypsy sites that already exist in the locality".

The Council, through its partner Aragon Housing Association, is already actively pursuing its homelessness responsibilities. My letter to you dated 8 October sets out the Council's conclusion regarding appropriate accommodation. The Council will meet its homelessness obligations.

Yours sincerely

Simon Redmore
 Strategic Director
 Mid Beds District Council

Julie Chatters wrote:

> > Please find attached letter from Simon Redmore, Strategic Director at
> Mid Beds District Council.
> > _____
> > Name: grattonpxxon.doc
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